

VISTA Blend FAQ

What is the VISTA Resource Development: Fundraising & Grant Writing course?

Resource Development: Fundraising & Grant Writing is a 10-week introductory course for VISTAs serving in the area of resource development. Students will complete quizzes and written assignments that address individual giving, special events and grant writing within the VISTA context of building organizational sustainability and increasing organizational service capacity.

What is the VISTA Volunteer Mobilization course?

Volunteer Mobilization is a 12-week online course which orients VISTAs to the field of volunteerism and volunteer program planning. In this introductory course, VISTAs will learn about planning and implementing recruiting, screening and training strategies that can be applied to their VISTA site. As students participate in the course, completing assignments and quizzes along the way, they will build knowledge and skills in volunteer mobilization.

When are these courses being offered?

Courses will be offered in the winter, spring and fall of 2013.

2013 summer term class dates:

- **Volunteer Mobilization course dates: May 27 – August 11, 2013**
- **Resource Development course dates: June 10 – August 11, 2013**

Fall courses to run September-November (specific dates TBA).

How do VISTAs apply for the courses?

VISTAs interested in taking one of the Blend courses are asked to complete an online application process which includes reviewing the course syllabus, talking with their site supervisor about the course, and completing a short online questionnaire. The application process is open for three weeks, starting six weeks prior to the course start date. The application can be found on the VISTA Blend section of the VISTA Campus at

www.vistacampus.gov/vistablend

2013 winter term application dates:

April 29 – May 19, 2013

Fall applications periods TBA.

How are VISTAs admitted to the courses?

VISTAs who have completed the online application process are admitted to the course through a random lottery system. For each section of the course offered, 50 students are admitted and the remaining VISTAs are placed on a waitlist. Students admitted to the course are notified 2 weeks prior to the course start date and are asked to confirm their admission within 1 week. We will add students from the waitlist as space becomes available during the first two weeks of the course. VISTAs not admitted to the course are directed to selected course materials available on the VISTA Campus.

Where can I send VISTAs, projects or sponsors for more information about the courses?

The VISTA Blend information page on the VISTA Campus, located at:
www.vistacampus.gov/vistablend

What makes these online courses different?

The courses are designed specifically for the unique circumstances, opportunities, and challenges faced by VISTAs engaged in resource development and volunteer mobilization initiatives. The courses have been created by VISTA and our partners at Education Northwest and Bank Street College of Education, who bring more than 17 years of experience designing and delivering training to VISTA members and supervisors.

What does a VISTA get out of it?

In addition to gaining valuable knowledge and skills that can help VISTAs serve more effectively, those who successfully complete a course will earn 3 transferable academic college credit recommendations, thanks to our partnership with the American Council on Education.

What does a sponsoring organization get out of it?

If resource development or volunteer mobilization is one of the VISTA member's responsibilities, the courses' learn-by-doing approach will equip the VISTA in a very short time with the knowledge and skills needed to carry out their assignment. This can reduce the "learning curve" and enhance productivity, particularly for VISTAs new to the nonprofit sector. VISTAs will learn how to develop targeted products and relationships that can grow and sustain your organization's efforts.

The courses can also help support a VISTA's motivation, service satisfaction, and morale. The opportunity to acquire nonprofit resource development or volunteer mobilization knowledge, skills and transferable college credits through VISTA service is a strong retention incentive.

Is there a cost involved?

There is no cost to a VISTA who enrolls in a course, and no financial contribution is expected from sponsoring agencies. VISTAs who wish to access course credits upon completing the course will pay a small transcript fee (approximately \$40) to the American Council on Education.

Is this going to distract a VISTA from their work?

In the spirit of service learning, course activities will be practical and applicable, to the fullest extent possible. We believe these courses will not intrude upon the VISTA's responsibilities in any significant way.

Who can I talk to if I have questions or concerns?

For questions or concerns about the course or a member's participation in it, contact the VISTA Blend team at VISTABlend@educationnorthwest.org or 503-275-9612.